

# ANCIENT WISDOM



Vocab p.29.  
A monthly journal devoted to teaching theosophical and occult truths

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."—Hamlet

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## ENVIRONMENT, HEREDITY AND SOUL HISTORY

BY CHARLES E. LUNTZ

V

What then must one do to be saved? —To be saved that is, from the consequences of the wrong belief that has formed some festering wound in the higher bodies which has reflected itself in the physical, in the shape of an upset condition of brain, nerves or both, or perhaps as an actual body pain or discomfort that medical science can neither diagnose nor cure?

Well, just as the evangelistic preachers tell us we must change our beliefs to obtain salvation, so, curiously enough, a change of belief is necessary here to escape from the hell of mental suffering in which one may have been languishing for years without knowing wherein he has "sinned". And if the psychoanalyst who has failed to relieve him after long exploration of his past of this life, cannot or will not also change his own belief that there is no other life to which the trouble may trace, then we recommend that the patient try to do it himself. This is more difficult but quite possible. Psychoanalyzing oneself is recognized as a feasible technique, and this is fortunate as few can spare either the time or money for the long sessions and repeated consultations necessitated by the professional services of a first rate practitioner.

So what follows may be put into practice either with or without a psychoanalyst—and we rather think it will be mostly without, unless we have among our readers—as we hope—some enlightened member of the profession who will recognize the validity of the suggested method and that it is merely a logical extension of the conventional system initiated by Freud and developed and added to by his able successors.

To repeat what was said in the last installment: Theosophists who truly believe in and live their Theosophy never find it necessary to go to psychoanalysts for treatment. If we can discover why this should be, we shall find the clue to what the non-Theosophist has to do to rid himself of his ills.

He has first to recognize that the things that happen to him, pleasant or unpleasant, are never from the standpoint of his own soul either punitive or rewarding. They are always correc-

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## IS REINCarnation A FACT?

By T. H. REDFERN

(Continued from Last Month)

The acceptance of reincarnation among one's working assumptions of life brings deep changes of outlook. For one thing family relations are seen as temporary associations brought about by the connections of physical heritage. There is a loosening of the sense of bondage to the family. Children are no longer thought of as created by their parents and belonging to them, for the parents are no more than providers of one of a series of many habitations, and in different lives we shall doubtless be the sons and daughters and husbands and wives of many individual friends. Doubtless there is a continuity of linkage and association of those who come into close and intimate contact, and the relationships between personalities during one life period will have their consequences in the associations of future personalities arising from the same reincarnating individuals. The personal links of birth therefore become secondary, and we see why we may have deeper and more enduring ties with some friends than we have with members of our own family. Family connections may indeed be often the means of working out past ties of attachment, both of sympathy and antipathy, in relationships enforced upon us by the circumstances of rebirth.

In all these as well as the affinities and conflicts of our social associations, we experience a series of relationships to be fulfilled and worked out to a karmic balance. The folly and pain which result from our ignorant impulsiveness begin to appear not so much as evils to be complained about, but instructors to be heeded. We gain a clear goal, and the attainment of skill in the art of living becomes a fascinatingly interesting task. A deep purpose in life is discovered, new dimensions of thought are opened up, and our past experiences and activities fall gradually and naturally into new perspectives that are most satisfying and revealing.

So while we cannot conclusively prove beyond skeptical resistance that reincarnation is a fact, this difficulty applies to all the deeper realities of life which have to be perceived not by logic, whose function it is to detect error, but by a faculty of reason through which we discern truth in a stage of probability that becomes con-

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## FIDELITY TO THEOSOPHY

By MARIE RUSSAK HOTCHENER  
WITH HENRY HOTCHENER

In the first issue of *The Theosophist*, published in India in October 1879, Madame Blavatsky said:

"By that higher intuition acquired by *Theosophia*—or God-knowledge, which carried the mind from the world of form into that of formless spirit, man has been sometimes enabled in every age and every country to perceive things in the interior or invisible world . . . Theosophy is the exact science of Psychology . . . It develops in man a direct beholding; that which Schelling denominates 'a realization of the identity of subject and object in the individual'; so that . . . man thinks divine thoughts, views all things as they really are, and, finally, becomes 'recipient of the Soul of the world,' to use one of the finest expressions of Emerson."

As time went on, and to the end of her life, 1891, H. P. B. in her writings and her oral teachings labored unceasingly to help people to acquire this inner "realization" for themselves. She told them that this required the imposing upon oneself of a physical, emotional, and mental discipline which would gradually change the focus of the debasing elements of the outer world to the elevating elements of the inner.

She herself was living proof of the wisdom, the power, the selflessness and the capacity for helping others, to which that discipline led; she herself was proof that it led also to contact and association with the perfected men, the Masters of Wisdom, at whose behest she lived and worked.

Because of her work and that of her colleagues, then and since, thousands of people in practically every part of the world have learned something of Theosophy—the truths of the conscious immortality of the soul through the life after death, reincarnation, karma, etc., as expounded by her and other popular Theosophical writers. Not so many have continued their interest and passed on intellectually to the study of the deeper truths of Theosophy as expressed in her monumental work, *The Secret Doctrine*, which contains the wisdom of the ages and the answer to practically all of the vital questions which are today troubling the hearts and minds of the world's leading thinkers—scientists, philanthropists, religious statesmen, artists, industrialists.

Still fewer have been the courageous  
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## ANCIENT WISDOM

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## THEY REALLY BELIEVE IT

There is no assurance on earth quite like the assurance of the convinced follower of some orthodox religion who does not have sense enough to keep his convictions to himself when they are not wanted. And often there is no tactlessness quite so tactless as that with which he—or more likely she—endeavors to drum this conviction into the “unbeliever.” There is nothing subtle about it. The text is the harsh pronouncement attributed to Jesus but which all informed scholars declare to be a spurious interpolation: “He that believeth shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned.” This is just the uncompromising judgment that our orthodox and wordy friend is looking for, and with it he really makes hay.

Believe! Believe! Only believe, and though one be murderer, thief, libertine and despoiler of the poor, deathbed repentance will take one straight through the pearly gates to wear a crown, play a harp, and join the bright angelic throng forever. Dare to express one teensy little doubt as to the justice, righteousness or probability of such a convenient arrangement for repentant “sinners,” and the black looks and wrathful invective that will be hurled at you should shrivel your wicked soul. Bible texts (usually quoted incorrectly) will shower on you, proving that you are a lost creature. Hell hath one greater fury than a woman scorned—a religious fanatic doubted.

Your best recourse is to walk away. Terrible condemning eyes will follow you, and when you have gone the stern pleader of God’s cause, as he conceives himself (poor bloke!) to be, will mournfully (and hopefully) consign you to the lowest depths of hell, piously thanking heaven that it has been vouchsafed to him to behold the light, not to say the heat.

There is little hope in the current incarnation, and perhaps not for many incarnations to come, for the crack-brained zealot of this type. He may be a reincarnated inquisitioner who has not yet learned his lesson, for his kind would happily drive your kind and my kind to the torture chamber and the stake if the law permitted. He would maim or burn your body to save your

soul and a few hundred years ago he had the power to put the first half of the program into effect.

These people really believe the absurdities they try to force on others, and under the Constitution they are entitled to believe them—under the Theosophical Society’s Declaration of Principles also. The Theosophist has no objection even to one believing—for himself—that a hundred-and-forty-four thousand only shall be saved and countless billions damned, as one Christian Sect insists. But the Theosophist objects most strenuously to assaults on his own spiritual integrity. He knows what he believes and why he believes it. And he declines to exchange the minted gold of his own true knowledge for the shinplaster currency of Third Century invention.

But let us give these misguided bigots their due. They believe that they and they alone are right. They know nothing of the history of the strange ideas they so frenziedly hold. If they do, then indeed they are hypocrites for no one familiar with the true origins of the fables, legends and imaginings which have grafted themselves on religion can truly regard them as of God. But most of the lay exponents of religious authority, whether attributed to Church or Bible, are remarkably uninformed on both. It has been our experience that those who most righteously and loudly uphold the Bible as a divinely inspired production—“yes, every word, every letter, Sir”—know very little about it. They will plunge into discussions for which they have no background, and are so easily confounded by citations from their own beloved book that it is not worth the slight effort involved to confute them.

The real Bible student—and there are not many of him—is much more wary. He expects pitfalls and if he has an agile and informed opponent he soon gets them. Whereupon he usually breaks off the discussion with some profound words about Divine Mysteriousness, or else gets very angry and proclaims you a decrier of God’s word. Even the student who plods away daily at the literal text, saturating his mind with polysyllabic names and astronomical ages of people who never lived, is seldom competent to discuss the Bible rationally. He may know what is in it but he has curious notions, quite unrelated to reality, of how it got there.

The Theosophist has no quarrel with the Bible reader who finds comfort and inspiration in its many magnificent and uplifting passages. He too may find comfort and inspiration there. Henry Hotchner’s tribute, prominently published in a recent issue of ANCIENT WISDOM, to the great book which has been a solace to millions would be echoed, we think, by most Theosophists. But this does not blind them to the fallacy of regarding it as inerrant, taking each word in a literal sense never intended by the authors, and using

sentences brazenly inserted by copyists and translators to buttress horrible beliefs such as eternal punishment because the maladjusted copyists or translators wanted biblical authority for them.

It is better not to argue religion, but sometimes, when the misguidedly religious (and note we say *misguidedly*) corner you because they have discovered you are, woe betide! a Theosophist, you may scarcely be able to avoid defending your “odd” beliefs. They will “throw the book at you,” the book being the Bible—or else invoke against you all the thundering supernatural power of “Holy Mother Church,” which has lots of power here, but fortunately nary a power hereafter, regardless of the interpolated verses in Matthew.

Do not let them or anyone else intimidate you. You are inherently as divine as your would-be judges, as much a child of God as they, as fitted, if not better fitted, to decide for yourself the spiritual path in which you choose to walk. Make yourself positive—alike to the fool who says there is no God as to the human hyena who would like God to torture you eternally because you refuse to believe that he is that kind of monster-god.

You will find no loftier, no more exalted concept of the Most High, no matter where you may seek, than is to be found in Theosophy. You will discover no philosophy more satisfying, no religion more credible, no teaching that is purer, no guidance that is more helpful. Why then allow some mulish bigot, whose brassy assurance is matched only by his ignorance of his own subject, to hammer you down with a dull counterfeit of the glowing truths you already hold? Perhaps a hundred or a thousand lives ago you and I believed like that, talked like that, preferred illogic in religion to logic, and worshipped a bad-tempered deity with an arson complex for those he didn’t like.

Conversely, perhaps after a hundred or a thousand lives to come, the doctrinaire brother or sister will be as vigorously defending theosophical concepts as he now venomously attacks them. A far better destiny for him than he is hopefully reserving for you!

Which seems best to exemplify true “Christian charity”—his view, or yours?

## BUREAU OF OBSERVATION

About twenty-five years ago Krishnamurti aroused the ire of the more humorless members of The Theosophical Society by calling it a “Bureau of Observation.” To some, who regarded the Society very much as a Roman Catholic regards his Church or a devout Protestant his Bible, this seemed a shocking slur. Others, including this writer, examined the term dispassionately and decided that it was apt. The Theosophical Society is a Bureau of Observation. It is a good deal more

than that also, but a Bureau of Observation it certainly is.

For if there is one person in all the world who wants to know all about everything, physical and non-physical, so far as it is possible for one person to absorb such knowledge in one incarnation, it is the Theosophist. And what he cannot get in this incarnation and has not acquired in past incarnations, he knows it is his destiny to assimilate in subsequent incarnations. And how can one amass knowledge but by observation? True, knowledge comes from experience, but experience must be observed and thought upon if it is to provide knowledge. And if the personality does not learn from experience because it does not observe its workings and think out its lessons, the Ego does. That, in fact, is the reason for the long centuries between earth lives. Devachan, like The Theosophical Society, is a "Bureau of Observation."

This is an interesting world. Everything about it is interesting to the gleaner of experience, even the bores and the boring. But some things are more interesting, more profitable than others. And the personality that goes through life taking in and thinking about what comes its way is no longer the flunkie of the Ego but the Ego's junior partner.

Which does not mean that one should seek to be bored in order to learn therefrom the lessons even boredom can teach. There are better things to do, and the bores have a way of doing their own seeking out, especially when one is busy. But if one cannot get rid of a bore or dodge him before he inflicts his unwanted presence on someone with work to do, one can at least study his technique with a view to avoiding its duplication. The bore has an Ego who lives with him all the time and an Ego is never bored.

There are many ugly things in the world and in the characters of each one of us—even Theosophists. They are to be observed, too. The good is not attained by pretending that the bad does not exist. Milton in his famous *Areopagitica*, a powerful plea for the freedom of the press, uttered these remarkable words:

"What wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I can not praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows

not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an external whiteness."

No one can doubt the high morality of John Milton, a Puritan of the Puritans—a member of the Council of State of that hardy old moralist Oliver Cromwell. Yet Milton has only a sneer for virtue built on ignorance and not on knowledge. However, Milton, not being a Theosophist and probably never having even heard of reincarnation, which was not a Seventeenth Century topic of conversation, was unaware that one's experience of wrongdoing does not necessarily have to be in the current life. The individual able to turn away resolutely from debauched practices, not because he is afraid of consequences or discovery and not because he is ignorant of their existence, has had his appropriate experiences in some long past life. It may have taken more than one life—perhaps many—to hammer the lesson home, but if it has been learned perfectly it will not have to be relearned. Experiences this time, next time and for all the times to come, will pass him by without harm. The Ego, if not the personality, has "observed."

But at our present level of achievement few lessons are perfectly learned. Even the saints, if their writings are to be believed, had a terrible time in their earlier years resisting the "temptations of the flesh." Which is understandable to the Theosophist, who knows that the "formative" period of life frequently constitutes a sort of rapid review of the evolutionary stages of spiritual growth dating back hundreds of incarnations. The time comes when the necessity for this "refresher course" no longer exists, or it may be that for karmic reasons it is omitted in some earth lives. When it does come, however, it is by no means certain that if the lesson is only partially learned there will not be a relapse—even for the "saint."

An occultist is not impressed by the moaning and weeping, self-abasement and "guilt complex" the said saint thereupon proceeds to indulge in. We doubt, too, if we may make bold to say it, that God is particularly impressed either. And to the Ego we imagine such conduct must be something in the nature of an emetic. The seething emotionalism of a "sinning" saint has inspired a number of classical books, very dry reading for the unsaintly, but we don't think it helped along the saint's spiritual evolution.

For spiritual evolution is a slow business—slower by far than physical evolution, which is by no means impetuous. And that is a great comfort to the introspective Theosophist, who perceives by observation all kinds of faults and deficiencies in his makeup and knows exactly why they are there and what can be done about them. He will do his best to correct them in his present life, but if, as the years advance,

he finds he has not made too much progress he will not, like his religious but uninformed brother, despairingly cast himself on the mercy of God.

The Deity must be very understanding of the humans He has evolved. As they are part of Himself and He lives in each one, is indeed the Actor in all of their actions, the Thinker in all of their thoughts, He could not be otherwise. The pious talk much of "condoning sin" when the ungodly who happen to be Theosophists refuse to subscribe to the fatuous concept that God hates sin, will show no mercy to "sinners" unless they accept certain beliefs, follow specified formulae or rituals, and generally abide by the rules and regulations of those claiming to know what God wants and what He will do or refrain from doing if the rules are broken. Perhaps all this assurance and authority has its uses for the spiritually immature. For those even within hailing distance of spiritual, not to say intellectual maturity it is an indignity.

Keep your "Bureau of Observation" working—your own Bureau. You are, as a student of these things, beyond the need of relying on the Observation Bureau of someone else. Others may supply facts, suggestions, hints, clues and enlightenment; but you, the Observer, must assemble this material and with it build your philosophy, your beliefs, your own personal religion. The Ego has, through his personalities, had many religions in his many lives. He is not deceived as to the sterling worth of any one of them as against the others, for in such matters and on his own plane he knows the Truth. All of them in some degree have probably helped him—some of them in some degree may have hindered his progress. And now, through this personality, he has found or re-found Theosophy, in which all that is good in all religions culminate and in which there is nothing to impede, nothing to fear, nothing to frustrate.

The Ego must be buoyant with happiness when his personality becomes a Theosophist.

The question is asked, "May not Russia be right and we be wrong?" We suggest that the inquirer study the record himself, including that regarding the Russian slave-labor camps, the driving out of the Theosophical Society, the constant rebuffs of our countless well-meant and sincere efforts to reach an understanding with Russia after World War II. There is a great deal of other evidence he might consider before reaching a decision. Then let him answer his own question. If he decides that Russia is right and we are wrong, he should certainly emigrate there if they will have him. After getting there, if he is successful in doing so, we will wager a framed copy of the Constitution of the United States to a package of Russian cigarettes (although we don't smoke) that he will soon change his mind.

## REAL PROBLEMS OF REINCARNATION

15. Is a very clever person necessarily an old soul? If so, what about savages, known to be young souls, who sometimes have great skill in certain ways?

The person remarkably skilled along one particular line and remarkably unskilled in most others is one who has followed that special line in many of the lives he has lived, to the exclusion of his all-around development. He may be quite a young soul but even young souls have, at our present average level of evolution, dozens or scores of lives, while the incarnations of the older Egos run into the hundreds. A dozen or a half-dozen lives spent in perfecting one particular branch of accomplishment is a good many. The savage with a genius for hunting, fishing, diving, jungle lore or any other of the primitive arts in which a savage may excell, has enough lives behind him to have learned his subject very well if he diligently applied himself to it in every incarnation.

But *all-around* skill argues for many incarnations and at least a fairly old soul. A genius such as that of Shakespeare or Leonardo da Vinci, Michaelangelo or Benjamin Franklin is evidential proof of an extraordinarily advanced Ego, far older and therefore far ahead of the common run. The innate gifts of these giant souls were not acquired in the dozen or so lives the merely clever individual needed to perfect himself in his specialty.

It is said that a high degree of spirituality, approaching Christliness, is the truest badge of an old soul, yet here again we must beware of over-simplification. An Ego following the devotional path and nothing else for say fifty incarnations might show out far more spirituality, though comparatively young in time, than a much older Ego whose pursuits over several hundred lives had been mainly material. Scientific geniuses are sometimes, not always, atheistic. Men and women of great piety and benevolence—the real thing, not the cant of the religious show-off—are not seldom amazingly impractical in the ordinary affairs of life. They have specialized in altruistic endeavor incarnation after incarnation but there have not as yet been enough of these to instill into them the knowledge of other branches of living which they also must acquire in the course of their evolutionary journey.

In this field as in all others, we must beware of over-simplification. Lives are complicated affairs. It is a sign of shallow reasoning always to be ready with particularized explanations of effects which by their very nature may trace to a variety of causes. Esoteric teaching, avoiding details, lays down principles, and it is the principles that matter, not the details. The Ego cares nothing for the millions of separate episodes, large or small, that

have marked his repeated incarnations with their impress. He cares very much for the effects of this impress on his permanent character. And the individual who is not all eaten up with the petty happenings of the moment, who, without offending anyone, is able to keep an uncluttered outlook on those vistas of life that really matter, is pretty far along in evolution. It takes time, and lots of it, to arrive at the point where "what he said" or "what she said," the gossip of the moment, the small talk of society, and the thousand trifles of everyday living are recognized as not life but the foam on the surface of life. A casual look around will quickly bring conviction that not too many have reached that recognition.

The clever person may be the product of comparatively few lives devoted to one specialty or, if the cleverness is all-around, of many lives devoted to many specialties. But whichever is the case, he has chosen to use his will to keep hard behind the particular interest he is pursuing in a given cycle.

What are the alternative theories to this obviously just one (which is no theory to some but a matter of knowledge)? There are two "competing" ideas, if indeed they may be so termed in view of their evident deficiencies. One is that the Deity bestows talent or genius capriciously on whomsoever he wills—no particular reason, he just decides to do it that way. He also makes others imbecilic or stupid—also for no reason. That is his will, and who may question? The Theosophist wants no part of that kind of deity, and has no possibility of having any, seeing that such an unjust and arbitrary god does not exist. The medieval theologians and their atavistic counterparts of today profess to believe that the god they have constructed in their own peanut image operates in that fashion. It is all too evident, reading between the lines of their nonsensical pronouncements, that what pops out is a revelation of their own stunted mentalities. If they had the power they attribute to their god, they would do things just like that, undoubtedly they would. Fortunately they do not have it and as their god is a myth he does not have it either. We make ourselves life by life what we become, and there are many lives—enough even for an Ego who works so tardily that he seems almost to have gone on a slow-down strike.

The other "competition"—just as silly—comes from the materialists—CHANCE. The genes and chromosomes determine genius, talent, character, everything else in the makeup, physical or non-physical. Outside of the fact that they have a different name for him, their god, *Chance*, is a blood-brother of the one described above. What is the difference? Both are capricious, arbitrary, entirely unjust and neither has any reasoning power nor any sense.

Which is not denying the validity of

the gene-chromosome theory so far as the physical heredity is concerned. But Egos are directed by Supreme Intelligence working through its karmic agencies, to exactly the bodies they have worked for and earned. The genes and chromosomes supply the physical habitation (and even their action is not by chance but is guided) yet the Ego furnishes the inner spiritual entity who is to use them. He is in fact that entity or, it would be more correct to say, that entity is a fragment of him, for no Ego can put down more than a fraction of his great Being into a physical body.

That is the answer to the riddle of cleverness combined with backwardness, as it so frequently is. Analyze it and see if you like it better than the "chance" theory or the irresponsible god theory. We are inclined to think you will, for it is certain that God likes it better . . . and ordains it that way.

(To Be Continued)

## MINSTRELSY

A Selection From The Poems of Patience Worth

### Life Unafraid

Come Life,  
Have a mug with me.  
Lift the cup in troth  
To today.  
Time is the nag  
Which we may ride.  
Come then, unfeared.  
Let us ride hence.

## OBSCURE TERMS THAT THEOSOPHISTS SHOULD KNOW

If a Theosophist is to make any impress with his philosophy on the mind of the well-informed he must be able to speak their language. If he presents theosophical teaching either privately, in class or on the lecture platform and seekers or doubters query him and advance their own arguments based on religion, theology or philosophy, he is at a serious disadvantage if he does not understand the meaning of the terms they use. If he evades or covers up, his questioner, if alert, will not fail to push his advantage home, to the serious embarrassment of the lecturer or teacher.

There should be no embarrassed Theosophists—certainly none in the teaching or lecturing field. We are proud of the fact that Theosophy—and Theosophy alone—is prepared to deal with the most searching questions that the human mind can formulate and in principle (though not necessarily in detail) to answer them clearly, logically, non-evasively. It does not take refuge in Agnosticism (we cannot know), nor in Atheism (there is no answer) nor in fanatic religionism (these are divine mysteries into which we dare not inquire). Its answers will not satisfy the unthinking, nor the shallow thinking, nor yet even the deeper thinking who can go thus far in their reasoning and beyond that are mired. But it will

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## DO YOU KNOW?—

That there is a school of thought in The Theosophical Society—and especially in those offshoots of the original Adyar body—that insists there is no after-death existence on the astral plane?

\* \* \* \*

That this group teaches the immediate translation of the personality at physical death into devachan or the heaven world, with no intermediate astral experience?

\* \* \* \*

That they base their view on statements made in the Masters' Letters and in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky?

\* \* \* \*

That study of these does appear to indicate an immediate devachan, with the astral body dropped on its own plane as a so-called shell, and of no more use to the personality than his lifeless physical body?

\* \* \* \*

That the clairvoyant investigations of C. W. Leadbetter and Annie Besant, also the writings of A. P. Sinnett who claimed direct contacts with the higher planes, most certainly affirm an astral existence before the personality moves to devachan?

\* \* \* \*

That these, however, do admit that in the case of the spiritually advanced this existence may be very short or even be experienced unconsciously, so that to all intents there is an immediate devachan?

\* \* \* \*

That here, as in the case of other alleged conflicts in theosophical teachings, the true explanation is very simple and obvious?

\* \* \* \*

That in the case of the later investigations it is evident that only a relative few of the billions of cases could possibly be looked up and, as each case is likely to be different than any other, inferences may have been drawn which were too sweeping?

\* \* \* \*

That no criticism attaches on that account to the devoted and self-sacrificing researchers, who themselves recognized the limitations surrounding their work and urged that their findings be accepted as only tentative and subject to change in the light of additional knowledge?

\* \* \* \*

That, on the other side, the Masters and H. P. Blavatsky were extremely guarded in the occult information they gave out and stated constantly that they were concealing far more than they were revealing?

\* \* \* \*

That this was due to the then condition of Western thought, almost entirely unprepared to accept the deeper and more awesome truths regarding the inner worlds?

\* \* \* \*

That the fear of spiritualistic at-

TO A LOST SUBSCRIBER  
(Or To Any Who Might Be Lost)

BY CHARLES E. LUNTZ

If we have lost your "sub." because you do not of some article  
Approve, we never seek applause and do not mind a particle.  
But if the reason really is that in the press and hurry  
Of other things you just forgot, that's truly grounds for worry.

What can we do that we don't do to head off this misfortune?

A slip of red appears in view, attention to importune,  
Enclosed with ANCIENT WISDOM right before the final lapse,

And make you say, "Aha! It's now renewal time," perhaps.

And if this does not bring it in we send a postal card:

"We do not want to lose you—we shall really take it hard

If we don't keep you, for we think you too don't want to lose us."

And many readers write, "We don't!" A few, of course, abuse us.

But our concern is genuine for those who don't reply.

It's often inadvertence as they later testify,

And plaintively inquire, "Why does the paper come no longer?

My interest in the things of which it treats was never stronger."

So, Reader who approves us, tell us how we can contrive

To counteract forgetfulness, subscriptions keep clive.

We'd like to come right to your door or call you up long distance,

But as this is not feasible, we crave your kind assistance.

If, when you open ANCIENT WIS., there flutters out a slip

That tells you your subscription has expired, please take the tip,

And, while the thing's before you, mail the small amount of money

To keep the paper rolling and our disposition sunny.

My doctrine is: Live that thou mayest desire to live again—that is thy duty—for in any case thou wilt live again!

—Nietzsche

A trifle antique, it is true, but we still like the snappy definition of the difference between the liberal and the orthodox churches. The former declare, "There is no Hell!" The latter, "The Hell there ain't!"

tempts to communicate with the departed on the astral plane also no doubt weighed with the Masters and H. P. B. in their "slighting" the post-mortem residence there and concentrating attention on the far more spiritual and desirable existence in devachan?

## OBSCURE TERMS THAT THEOSOPHISTS SHOULD KNOW

(Continued from Page 28)

satisfy, beyond any other conceptual system known to man, those with the profundity of intellect needed to grasp its mighty Truths—among the greatest in the Cosmos as the Cosmos can be apprehended by man.

The difficult words and terms used by the philosophically erudite are not at least as originally coined, intended as the medium for a display of pedantic learning. Like the terms Theosophists themselves use—*karma*, *dharma*, *devachan*, *rounds*, *chains*, *elementals*, and the like—they were invented or adapted because they expressed in a single term ideas which otherwise might take wordy explanations to elucidate. Once take the trouble—not much trouble—to master the meaning of the term, and every time it appears there appear also in the mind a clear picture of what it means.

Thus two people with reasonable knowledge of astrology, when in conversation, would save perhaps fifteen minutes of description if one of them in referring to an acquaintance remarked, "He's a Scorpio type" (or Aries, or Capricorn or any other of the twelve signs). Astrologer number two would instantly have been given a mental picture that he would clearly recognize carrying with it a more vivid description than if a hundred words had been employed.

With this idea in mind ANCIENT WISDOM will publish each month a few obscure terms—non-theosophical but a necessary addition to the vocabulary of those who present Theosophy either publicly or privately to those with some background of knowledge regarding the philosophies and theologies of the western world. Easterly terms, having been dealt with in a somewhat similar series a few years ago, will be omitted. The first list which will appear next month will cover *Apologetics*, *Epistemology*, *Pragmatism*, *Hedonism*. They look pretty formidable at first glance, but each is explainable in simple language. The explanations will be fuller than dictionary definitions but not over-long. The relationship of Theosophy (if any) to the system covered by the term and its agreement or disagreement with it will also be given.

And with ANCIENT WISDOM's insistence on clarity, readers may be sure that the meanings supplied will be readily understandable. Readers familiar with them will not take offense at our presenting them for the benefit of readers who are not.

## THE ZODIAC IN "QUOTES"

Gemini

Curiously testing new opinions and courting new impressions.

—Walter Pater

**IT MAKES NO SENSE THAT—**

Anyone should profess an ardent belief in Brotherhood unless he displays in his own life.

\* \* \* \* \*

We should deceive ourselves into thinking that we have done our bit for brotherhood by writing articles about it, introducing its theme constantly into our lectures and bestowing our blessing on "Brotherhood Weeks" or "Brotherhood Months," if our unbrotherly actions belie our brotherly words.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our brotherliness should extend only to those who "yes" us and approve of everything we do, while to those who dissent from our views or offer criticism, we behave with about the same resentment and ill-humor as people who have no interest in Brotherhood and regard it as a nebulous dream.

\* \* \* \* \*

Theosophists should have a sort of Wednesday night Theosophy, as some churchgoers have a Sunday morning religion, and like them ignore the principles to which they pay lip service—including Brotherhood—the rest of the week.

\* \* \* \* \*

Theosophists should show displeasure when these obvious but often slighted truths are emphasized, seeing that such displeasure—as psychologists know—indicates a subconscious awareness of a painful fact.

\* \* \* \* \*

We should preen ourselves that it is due to our efforts alone or even in significant measure that the present emphasis on Brotherhood is "in the air," seeing that many other organizations including the Churches have also made this goal their own and the mite we have contributed—mainly by pen and voice—is only a small wave in a large ocean.

**ENVIRONMENT**

(Continued from Page 25)

ive or educational or both. They are to condition him over many lives for the perfection in conduct, knowledge and power that is the ultimate aim of evolution. If he is at very long last to respond to whatever happens in exactly the right way, never in the wrong way, everything humanly possible must happen to him some time or other, and as he is certain to respond wrongly to begin with and for a lengthy period hereafter, such being human nature, everything possible has to happen to him many times. Hence many lives, many repetitive occurrences—a little different in detail each time to vary the regime, but a wearying round in

**IT MAKES SENSE THAT—**

If we wish to impress the world with the fact that we are the nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of man we should at all times show kindness, goodwill and warmth of heart even toward those who disagree with us.

\* \* \* \* \*

As the world "little notes nor long remembers" professions and protestations of Brotherhood but does occasionally take notice of unusual behavior (unaccompanied by advertising) that indicates possession of the quality itself, Theosophists who aim at the high goal set in our First Object should earnestly strive to live it more and talk about it less.

\* \* \* \* \*

We demonstrate our fitness to form the Brotherhood nucleus of our First Object by respecting differing opinions when offered with due courtesy, and certainly not by suppressing or ignoring them, in violation of our own T. S. Declaration of Principles.

\* \* \* \* \*

Theosophists should live their Theosophy—including Brotherhood—in their business, professional, household and social lives and not think that they have fulfilled the dharma of being Theosophists merely by what they do in or for The Theosophical Society.

\* \* \* \* \*

All of us—and most certainly including this writer—being in process of spiritual evolution, should fall far short of perfection in our attempts to live Theosophy—and Brotherhood—but it is for us to do our utmost to achieve the former, and until we do perhaps we might with good grace not fuss so much with words about the latter.

\* \* \* \* \*

What we really can do in the great Brotherhood cause is to devote ourselves wholeheartedly to propagating our own mighty knowledge of the theosophical truths that are the heart and soul of that Universal Understanding that is Brotherhood itself.

each life of basic lessons to be learned—until they are learned, and thoroughly. Then they cease. Some of them have been learned, perhaps long ago. Others have not. The learning often involves what seems like severe punishment to the personality—pain, deprivation, bereavement, loss. That is incidental. The learning may also seem like a reward. That is incidental, too. There are lessons of prosperity to be absorbed as well as lessons of adversity—and these are the hardest of all. Usually they are flunked, indicating to karma that they are premature. A long time will then have to elapse before they are offered again. Which is the reason adversity is so much more general than prosperity.

Suffering poses many problems, is intended to teach many lessons—patience, will to overcome, sympathy, understanding, but *never* resignation. Only the believer in one poor life must feel himself resigned to anything. The incurable, the sightless, the maimed, who have exhausted every possibility of remedy in this incarnation will have other lives—hundreds of them, thousands of them, when they will be strong and seeing and whole as the best of their fellows. The bereaved will meet again those they have lost, not only hereafter but here again on earth in new guise. No one fails permanently in anything he desires earnestly to do. And when he fails temporarily there is a karmic purpose in the failure. The time is not ripe for him to succeed, perhaps because he has not properly done his part, perhaps because karma has other—and better—plans for him. Karma is always benevolent, always has the best interests of each one at heart, even though outwardly it may seem harsh and cruel.

What then of the extraordinary abnormalities with which the psychiatrist has so often to deal? Why the hidden resentments, the suppressed "sinful" longings that were not put into practice but buried in the subconscious to smoulder for decades and finally manifest in some obscure neurotic condition? The sufferer meant well. He—or she—thought they were doing the right thing in sternly battering down their "unholy" desires (we quote the clergy)—and now they have arisen to dreadful form to take their revenge. What's the matter? Doesn't God want one to be good?

God—or karma, which is God's law of action and reaction—wants one to be good and sensible. The good and stupid—if such a combination is possible—have, with the best of intentions, wrought a lot of evil in the world. They constructed, for instance, in the last century, a so-called moral code that consisted of suppressing all the facts of life and behaving as though such facts did not exist. But facts are stubborn things. They just won't be ignored out of existence. And the facts that are meant by the phrase "facts of life" are the stubbornest facts of all. Certainly they seem to send more people to the psychoanalyst's couch than any other cause. Freud was of opinion that there was no other cause for the weird neuroses with which psychoanalysis deals. His view is not altogether shared by some other specialists in the art, but even they admit that difficulties of this nature are largely responsible. And they are confined to no one class of society. The most cultured may be the victims, alike with the most ignorant. Indeed the former class, with its finer sensibilities and more vivid imagination, is more likely to be found in the assemblage of the neurotic than the latter.

Interestingly enough, occultists declare that the weaknesses associated

with the desire nature are the last to be conquered by the seeker after perfection. An esoteric statement in I Corinthians XV:26, makes the same pronouncement: "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." If this means what the literal words convey it is a strange statement for the Christian to believe. Does not death bring him to eternal life and bliss overflowing? Why then should death be termed an enemy? Surely it is, as the Theosophist declares, a friend "who sets free the soul from the heaviest of its chains, who opens the door to wider freedom," to use the beautiful words of the Theosophical Funeral Service.

But "death," as meant by the initiated writer of the Epistle, means something else, with which it is many times associated in scriptural symbology. The 55th and 56th verses of the same chapter furnish the answer:

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave (Greek, Hades) where is thy victory?"

The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."

And everyone knows what "sin" meant to the Bible writers as to our ancestors. There was practically only one kind of sin—that which was associated with the desire nature, or to use the modern term—sex, a word that does not appear in the Bible. The Book of Proverbs links up death with illicit sex many times, as do other scriptural passages. The symbology is astrological, for the Eighth House of the Horoscope and the sign Scorpio, also the planets Pluto and Mars, rule alike both death and sex. In the above passages the significant statement is the one last given: The sting of death is sin (sex) and the strength of sin is the law.

This makes no sense whatever if read literally. How is the law—the secular law—the strength of sin? The reverse is true, it would seem. The law is opposed to such sins—how can it be their strength?

But that is not the kind of law to which the Apostle refers. The law he means is exactly the Law we are trying to trace in this series—the Law of Karma. It is this which is responsible for the bodily, emotional and mental troubles caused by the "sins" of the past, which are not sins at all—there are no such things—but experiences gone wrong.

We shall see where this leads in the next installment, which will outline what might be termed "Reincarnational Psychoanalysis."

(To Be Continued)

#### REINCARNATION

(Continued from Page 25)

firmed first by its consequences in our lives, and ultimately by an awareness of its validity in our living experiences.

As we join the company of those throughout the centuries who have accepted the likelihood of reincarnation, or discovered its factuality, we find that we belong to a vast concourse of

mankind, for this is an idea that has appealed to the minds of men throughout the millenia and over the face of the earth. Most of the greatest minds of the metaphysical East have embraced it, for it is basic to Hinduism which has for long been the prevailing religion of India, and to Buddhism which is dominant in Tibet, Ceylon, Burma and Siam, and has penetrated largely into China and Japan. The idea was known and taught in Egypt. Among the Greeks such famous men as Pythagoras, Pindar, Plato and Plutarch held the doctrine in one form or other, and from them it passed to the Neo-Platonists, with such noble and honored names as Iamblichus, Plotinus, Porphyry and Proclus. Cicero, Virgil and Ovid were Romans who entertained it. Many great German philosophers accepted it, including Goethe, Lessing, J. G. Fichte, and Schopenhauer, who described Europe as "that part of the world which is haunted by the incredible illusion that man was created out of nothing and that his present birth is his first entrance into life."

The French philosopher Voltaire commented that there was nothing more remarkable in being born twice than in being born once, and among his compatriots Balzac expounded it, and Victor Hugo looked forward to his future reincarnations. Among Englishmen, the skeptical philosopher David Hume in his essay on *The Immortality of the Soul* said that transmigration is the only theory of immortality to which a philosopher can pay serious attention. T. H. Huxley thought it worth careful consideration. Edward Carpenter was convinced. In America Walt Whitman was positive, Oliver Wendell Holmes seems sure, Emerson curious, and Benjamin Franklin wrote his own reincarnatory epitaph:

The Body  
Of  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN  
Printer,  
Like the cover of an old book,  
Its contents worn out,  
And stripped of its lettering and gilding,  
Lies here, food for worms.  
But the work shall not be lost,  
For it will, as he believed, appear once more,  
In a new and more elegant edition,  
Revised and corrected  
by  
The Author.

It is remarkable, too, how the thought has fascinated the poets, some of whom have wistfully speculated about it in their verses, whilst others have boldly proclaimed their convictions. Coleridge, Wordsworth, Henley, Shelley, Whittier and George Eliot wondered if perhaps it were true. Tennyson has several references to it. Browning regretted that he could not be a sculptor, a painter and a musician as well as a poet in one life, but he wrote: "Other heights in other lives, God willing." D. G. Rossetti was sure of it:

"I have been here before,  
But when or how I cannot tell . . . .  
You have been mine before  
How long ago I may not know . . . ."

Longfellow was emphatic:

"Thus the seer, with vision clear,  
Sees forms appear and disappear  
In the perpetual round of strange  
Mysterious change."

From birth to death, from death to birth,  
From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth . . . .

Kipling boldly declared:

"As I pass through my incarnations in  
every age and race,  
I make my proper prostrations to the Gods of  
the Market Place.  
Peering through reverent fingers I watch them  
flourish and fall,  
And the Gods of the Copybook Headings, I notice  
outlast them all."

And again:

"They will come back, come back again as  
long as the red Earth rolls.  
He never wasted a leaf or a tree. Do you think  
He would squander souls?"

But our present-day Poet Laureate, John Masefield, has given it the most clear and direct exposition in his stanzas that begin:

"I hold that when a person dies,  
His soul returns again to earth."

In a later edition he altered the second word to "held", and I have often wondered whether that represented a move from conviction to skepticism or to uncertainty! In its original form Mr. Masefield wrote:

"Arrayed in some new flesh disguise  
Another mother gives him birth,  
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain  
The old soul takes the road again.  
"Such is my own belief and trust;  
This hand, this hand that holds the pen,  
Has many a hundred times been dust  
And turned as dust to dust again.  
These eyes of mine have blinked and shone  
In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon . . . ."

and, developing the theme of karma, and the way we are educated by experience, he concludes:

"So shall I fight, so shall I tread,  
In this long war beneath the stars;  
So shall a glory wreath my head,  
So shall I faint and show the scars,  
Until this case, this clogging mould,  
Be smitied all to kingly gold."

How does the theory of reincarnation square with the rise in the world's population? According to the teachings laid before the early members of The Theosophical Society for their consideration by the Adept instructors, through H. P. Blavatsky, it was said that the door into the evolution of the human kingdom is closed. Therefore the numbers of the fourth creative hierarchy—that is, present humanity in and out of bodies on this earth—should be diminishing to the extent to which the Arhat level is reached by the leaders in mankind's evolution; and furthermore, since in the course of evolution one would expect the average period of time in devachan or heaven to be increasing in relation to earth life, the consequence to be expected would be that the average number of babies being born would be diminishing—so-called "lost souls," and those on the occult path who are able and willing to forfeit devachan and therefore return quickly to be of help in coping with mankind's troubles, being presumably very minor elements in the total picture. In apparent opposition to this we have statistics showing a rapid increase in population, and the World Health Organisation at Geneva

## THOSE BARREN SUMMER MONTHS

★ ★ ★ ★

**ANCIENT WISDOM** invariably runs a heavy deficit during the summer. It has been eleven months since we made an appeal to our readers to help a little with the financing—last July, in fact. That was after renewals and donations had dropped off rather alarmingly—as they almost always do in June, July and August.

This year we thought we would take time by the forelock and make the appeal before the decline began. Readers have been generous, some of them to the point of munificence, and we have ridden along pretty well since the last appeal. We thought it would be rather nice if we headed off the customary summer nightmare by taking readers into our confidence before it started instead of after.

They have never let us down on any one of these appeals, knowing, we think, that we would not make them unless we felt they were really necessary. We are quite sure that this one will not be the exception.

**ANCIENT WISDOM**'s credit standing is excellent. It has always paid its bills promptly. Will you give us a little lift so that during the hot months when nearly everyone forgets us, we can keep doing so without strain?

estimated in 1951 that the world population has increased from about 1½ billions in 1900 to about 2½ billion in 1949, or an increase of about 850 millions.

It has been pointed out that these figures are not figures of births, but the figures of people living, and that all improvements raising the actuarial expectation of life are causing an increase in the world's population, not necessarily accompanied by an increase of the total births. In other words, by means of increased knowledge, education, and sense of responsibility for maintenance of health, the planet is being called upon to sustain a population well above the past average. This will presumably result in extended devachans, and consequently later a tide in world population, an ebbing and flowing according to these and other factors. This may well have happened before, and part of our problem is that world statistics of population have been kept for a very short time in the span of history, and therefore the evidence, one way or the other, is completely inconclusive. Nonetheless this is an aspect of the question of reincarnation which does cross the minds of men and women who are considering it, and therefore is a matter to which Theosophical magazines can well devote attention with a view to collating available information about the size of populations in the cultures of the past, and the significance of present trends.

(The End)

Had there been no Besant and Leadbeater, Blavatsky would have been, to thousands who revere her, not even a name.

### FIDELITY TO THEOSOPHY

(Continued from Page 25)

and determined souls who continued beyond these two stages into the third, wherein they developed the higher intuition and perceived "things in the interior or invisible world." The requirements for this were clearly given by H. P. B. in *The Voice of Silence*, and further details were given by her successors, Annie Besant, and C. W. Leadbeater, in their published works.

What rather surprises one who travels around the world and comes into touch with Theosophists, many of whom have been members of the Society for many years, is how few there are who have persisted in their regime of inner daily development, how few have conscientiously sought to understand what H. P. B. meant when she said, "Before the soul can see, the harmony within must be attained, the fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion." But what a delight it is to contact the few who have "attained," like our leaders and their principal co-workers! How prominent they stand in these times of doubt and unrest in the world, as well as in the Society! They have developed what H. P. B. calls "a direct beholding," they have proved for themselves not only the intellectual rationale of Theosophy, but its reality as a safe and sure guide in the conduct and progress of daily life, especially when unexpected obstacles arise in that life.

For example, in the history of the T. S. there have been crises which introduced difficult problems into the spiritual lives of members. Many, unable to solve them, left the Society and all its pleasant and sacred associations.

These crises have revolved around some person. But why should members leave the Society, separate themselves from the mighty purpose which it has for the world and for themselves individually because of any personality? When members thus leave, it is simply a proof that they have not yet seriously understood and unified themselves with that purpose, because that purpose is greater than, and outlives, all personality.

Those who persist in the practice of Theosophy, and who thereby awaken and develop the intuition of which H. P. B. speaks do not leave ese Society. They awaken an inner sense of balance, a conviction that spiritual realities are outside the sway of other personalities. This gives them a surety of stability that holds them steady while others wobble, are confused and uncertain.

What a joy it is to meet these radiant, poised members! As the weaker swirl about them in perplexity and unhappiness, these awakened ones stand quiet, serene, and sure, ready and able to help others to that same serenity. To many of them, who had already given the necessary years of self-discipline with minds and hearts unified with the great purpose, already come the "divine thoughts, the viewing all things as they really are," the conscious touch with the Masters who are the perfected expression of that divinity.

These radiant members are foci of unity wherever they are. The younger and lesser souls are strengthened by them, encouraged to solve these difficult problems when they arise—to solve them, not by running away from them by leaving the Society, but by taking the problems into their daily thought, analyzing them quietly and repeatedly until, through understanding and realizing, they are happily solved and the pupil, by the mental effort, strengthened and better able to meet future problems.

Fortunately, after five and seventy years of growth of the Theosophical Movement, there are many of these stronger souls at work, unshakeable, undaunted, when the trials come. They have proved for themselves the deeper principles of Theosophy; they are ready for the difficulties of life and of death; they can testify, many of them, from first hand experience that the Masters exist, that the inner potencies are real, and that the advice given in Theosophy as to how to develop one's spiritual nature is good advice and leads to the only permanent happiness to be found on earth.

These are times that try men's souls, and it is encouraging to know that there are now so many people in the world who can and do give proof, in their own persons, that Theosophy enables men to meet those trials, to triumph over them, and to go on with the current of events, unaframed, serene, and sure.

(The End)